

Multicultural Faith Leaders Unite to Halt Persecution of Middle East Christians

At an October 13 press conference in Jerusalem, prominent leaders of major Jewish and Christian global organizations announced a historic joint initiative calling on world leaders to take urgent, determined actions to halt the brutal persecution of Christians in the Middle East.

The joint initiative was unveiled at the Feast of Tabernacles celebration sponsored by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, with some 4,500 Christians from 80 nations in attendance.

The alarming situation for Christian minorities across the Middle East continues to worsen while world leaders have largely ignored this on-going human rights tragedy, laments a letter recently sent to heads of state and/or government for 95 democratic countries and co-signed by ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler, World Jewish Congress president Ronald S. Lauder and Dr. William M. Wilson, co-chairman of the Empowered21 Global Council and president of Oral Roberts University.

Dr. Bühler noted that the participation of Lauder as head of the main umbrella organization, representing world Jewry, together with leading evangelical ministries, makes this a historic initiative.

“The current plight of Middle East Christians is heart-breaking, and even Western churches have to do more to bring the suffering of our fellow believers to the forefront worldwide,” Bühler said. “But to have a prominent global Jewish leader lend his voice to this moral call for protecting the region’s persecuted Christians is unprecedented in modern

times. We welcome all others of goodwill who will take a stand now for these vulnerable ancient Christian communities.”

“Just as Christians defend Jews against anti-Semitism, just as Christians support Israel, we Jews have an obligation to speak out against the growing persecution of Christians in many parts of the world,” Lauder said in explaining his participation as head of the World Jewish Congress. “Islamist extremists have launched a full-fledged assault on our Western values, on our civilization, and Jews and Christians must work hand in hand to defeat this threat. For too long, the world has remained silent in the face of this evil. We must act before it is too late.”

“This letter gives an important voice to Christians who are being persecuted and even killed for their faith around the world, especially in the Middle East,” said Dr. Wilson of Oral Roberts University and Empowered21, a major network of evangelical leaders worldwide. “In this age of technology, we have a greater awareness of these types of alarming oppressions and a greater responsibility to protect Christian communities. Most Christ followers in these difficult situations will not respond with violence and therefore need global governmental authorities to stand with them against these injustices.”

All three signatories on the letter addressed the press conference on Monday afternoon at the new Jerusalem Pais Arena, where the ICEJ’s annual Feast of Tabernacles was being held. Also on hand to speak was Canon Andrew White, known as the ‘Vicar of Baghdad,’ an Anglican cleric who has become the leading voice of the battered Christians of Iraq.

Later that evening, Israel President Reuven Rivlin along with Lauder delivered greetings to the mass Christian gathering for the biblical festival of Sukkot. The audience included some two dozen parliamentarians from around the globe attending the yearly Chairmen’s Conference of the Israel Allies Foundation,

an inter-parliamentary forum of pro-Israel legislators.

The lawmakers also spoke out against the persecution of Christians in the Middle East during the Chairmen's Conference.

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